REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 6, 25, 28, 29, and 31 are currently pending.

In the Office Action dated May 4, 2004, claims 1, 6, 25, 28, 29, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,578,526 to Akram et al. in view of U.S. Patent 3,837,856 to Irving. The rejection is traversed for the following reasons.

Applicants thank Examiner Maldonado for the courtesy of a telephonic interview granted to Applicant's representative, Jonathan Hack, on October 5, 2004. During the interview, Applicants' representative presented arguments detailing how the cited references do not disclose the recited claims. Examiner Maldonado indicated that he would reconsider the outstanding grounds for rejection upon formal submission of these remarks. Accordingly, Applicants now submit in this response the remarks previously presented to the Examiner during the interview.

The Rejection of Claims 1, 6, 25, 28, 29, and 31

In the Office Action claims 1, 6, 25, 28, 29, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Akram et al. in view of Irving. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Office Action asserts that the combination of Akram et al. and Irving shows the elements recited in independent claims 1, 25, and 29 except the element that the removal is conducted at an ambient temperature of 150°C to 350°C. The Office Action goes on to assert that the claimed temperature range would have been obvious

because it would have been a matter of determining optimum process conditions by routine experimentation. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Preliminarily it is noted that Akram et al. do not disclose removal of photoresist using a plasma process. Irving, on the other hand teaches using a plasma photoresist removal step, but explicitly teaches that the temperature of the substrate should be between 100° to 120° C when hydrogen is used. *See* Irving col. 4, lines 16-18. Further, Irving teaches that the photoresist is to be removed at a relatively low temperature. *See* Id. at col. 1, lines 61-64. Indeed, Irving teaches away from the claimed temperature range by claiming that the substrate "does not rise to a temperature above 150°C." *See* Id. at col. 4, lines 66-67. As such, it would not have been obvious to remove photoresist at a temperature of between 150°C to 350°C, as recited in the independent claims.

The Office Action also asserts that the specification contains no disclosure of unexpected results arising from the claimed removal temperature. Applicants respectfully disagree. Among other things, according to various embodiments described in the instant specification, the exposed material can be passivated at the same time that the photoresist is removed when using the claimed temperature. *See, for example,* page 9, lines15-16; page 13, lines 6-10; and page 10, lines 12-14.

In contrast, Irving explicitly discloses that the temperature is between 100° to 120° C when hydrogen is used and that the temperature should be kept below 150°. Moreover, nowhere does Irving recognize passivation let alone passivation at the same time the photoresist is removed. Indeed, Irving's temperature is between 100° to 120° C when hydrogen is used.

In addition, claim 6 depends from independent claim 1, claim 28 depends from independent claim 25, and claim 31 depends from independent claim 29, and thus, claims 6, 28, and 31, respectfully, are allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 1, 25, and 29 are allowable, as well as for their additional recitations. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 6, 28, and 31 are also allowable over Akram et al. in view of Irving, either separately or in combination.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to the Texas Instruments Deposit Account 20-0668.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 8, 2004

By: _____
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